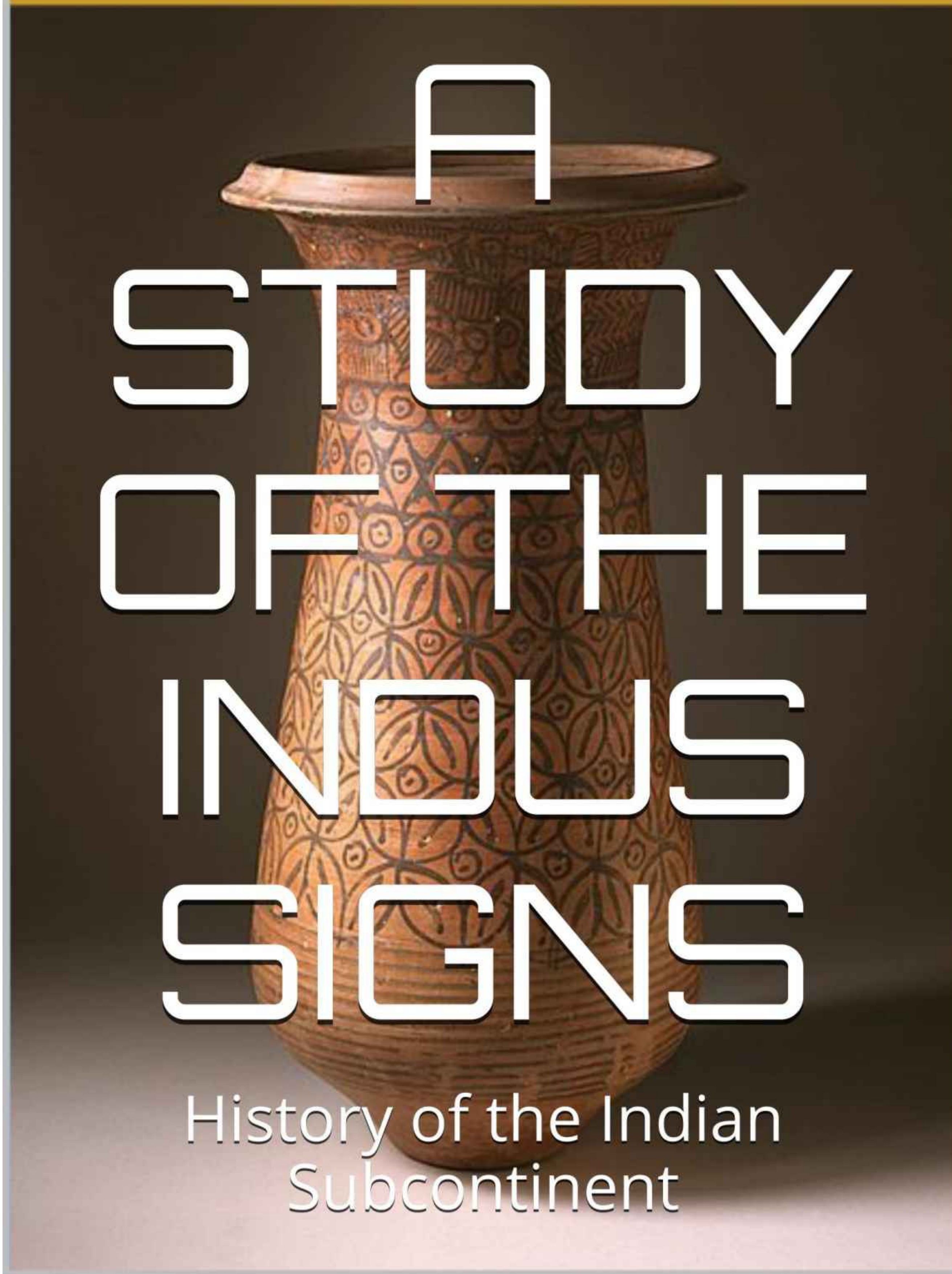
Subhajit Ganguly



A STUDY OF THE INDUS SIGNS

History of the Indian Subcontinent

A Study of the Indus Signs

Subhajit Ganguly

Tech Reads

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A Study of the Indus Signs

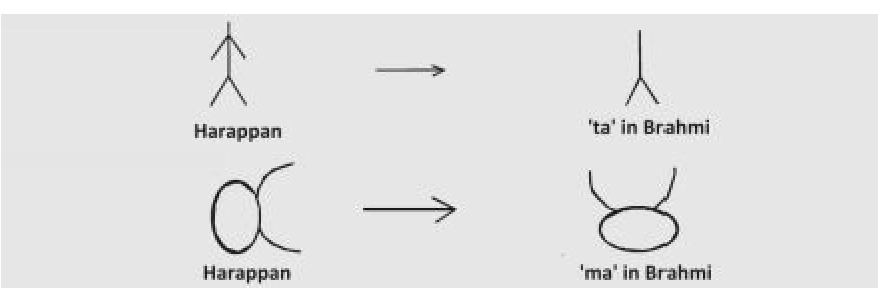
Key Ideas:

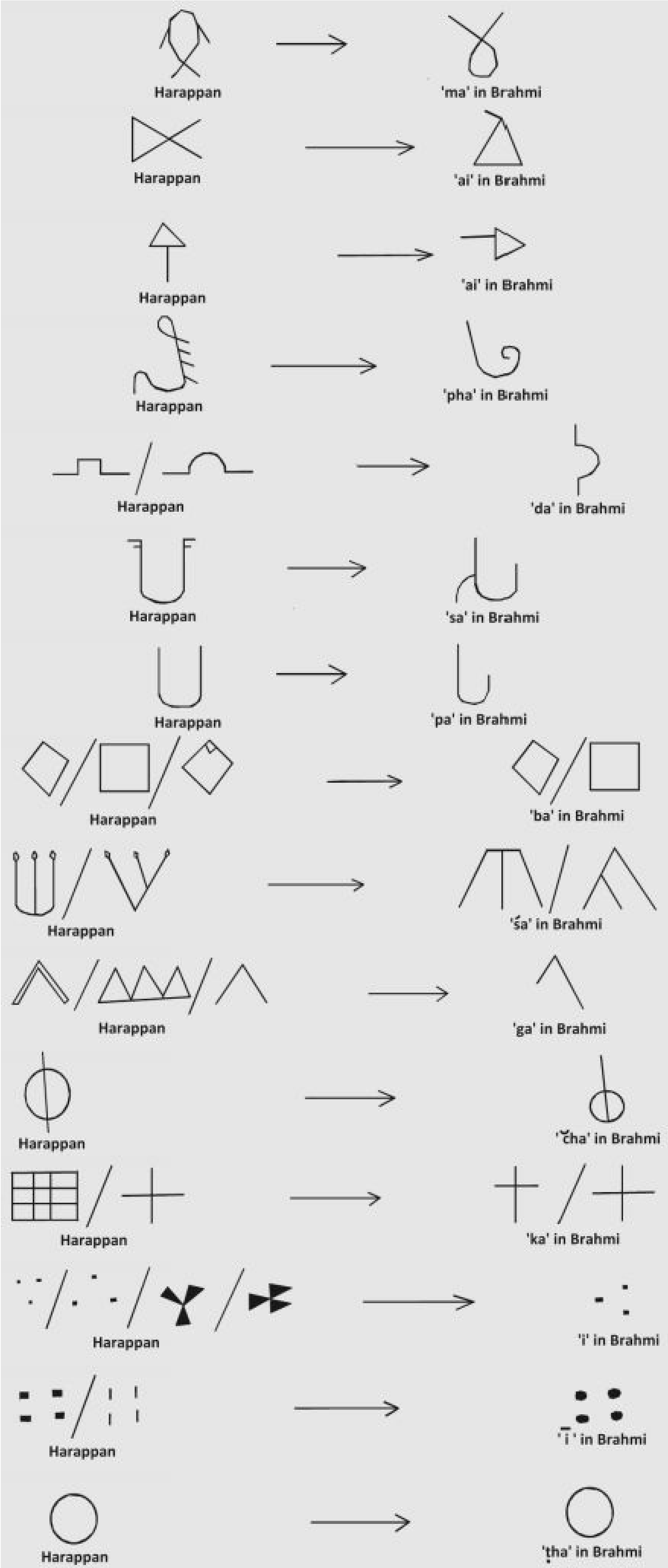
Considering the fact that the Harappan script may have been proto-Brahmi, the underlying language to be expected should be Sanskrit, or proto-Sanskrit, or derivatives of Sanskrit. Many of the rules of evolution that apply to scripts are equivalently true for languages too. Like scripts, languages too render themselves to similar evolutionary inspections, as they too carry imprints of their journey down the ages.

Complete List and What to Expect:

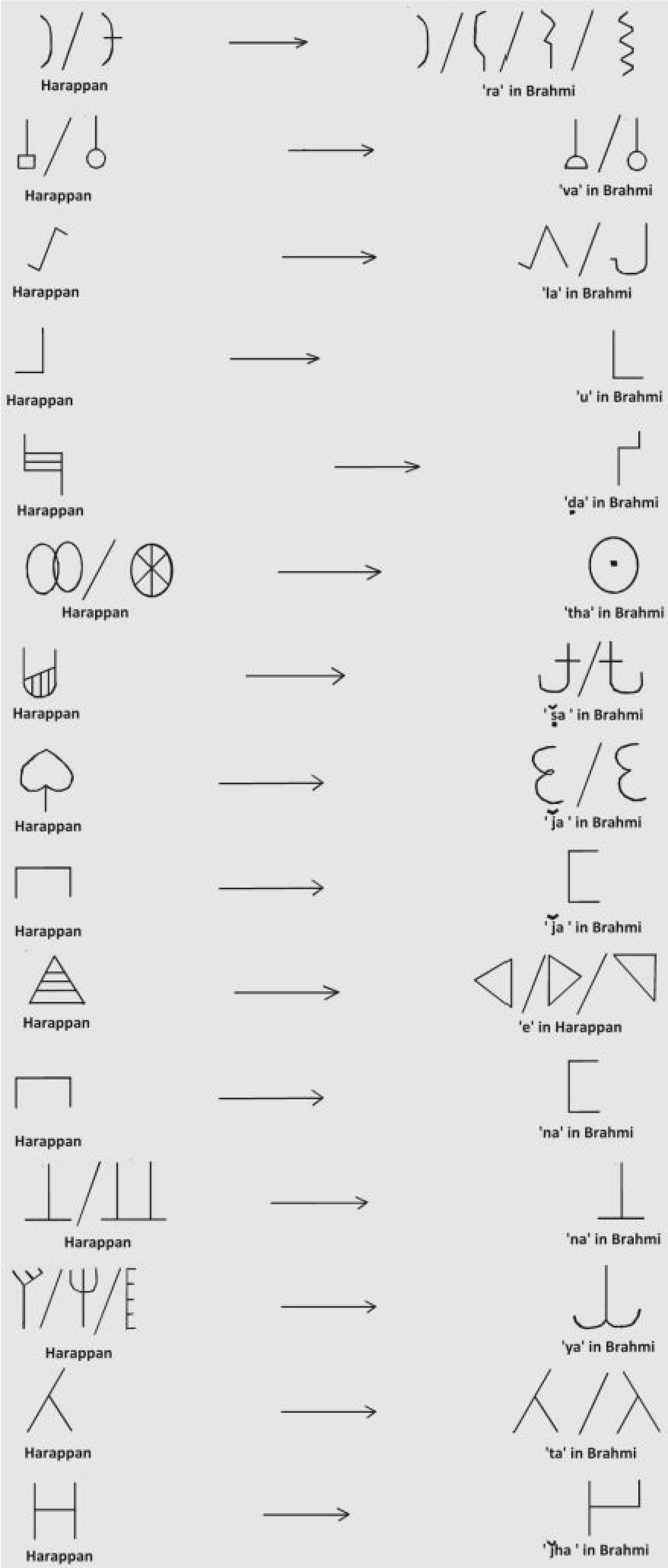
Depending upon the traits of evolution already discussed in the book Call Of The Lost Ages - A Study Of The Indus Valley Script we may prepare a list of Harappan symbols corresponding to the Brahmi. Such a primary list of characters may be of great aid to us in studying the Harappan inscriptions and understanding them. The chaotic situation that prevails due to such a large variety of characters in the inscriptions may also be mitigated by using this primary list of signs in understanding their meanings.

We will first tabulate the Harappan signs corresponding to the Brahmi, in the manner of the previous section and then go on to form a more comprehensive list. We will also discuss the underlying language of the inscriptions and what can be the possible meanings of these inscriptions, before we attempt to decipher them.
Here is a list of Harappan signs, the corresponding Brahmi signs and the sounds concerned:

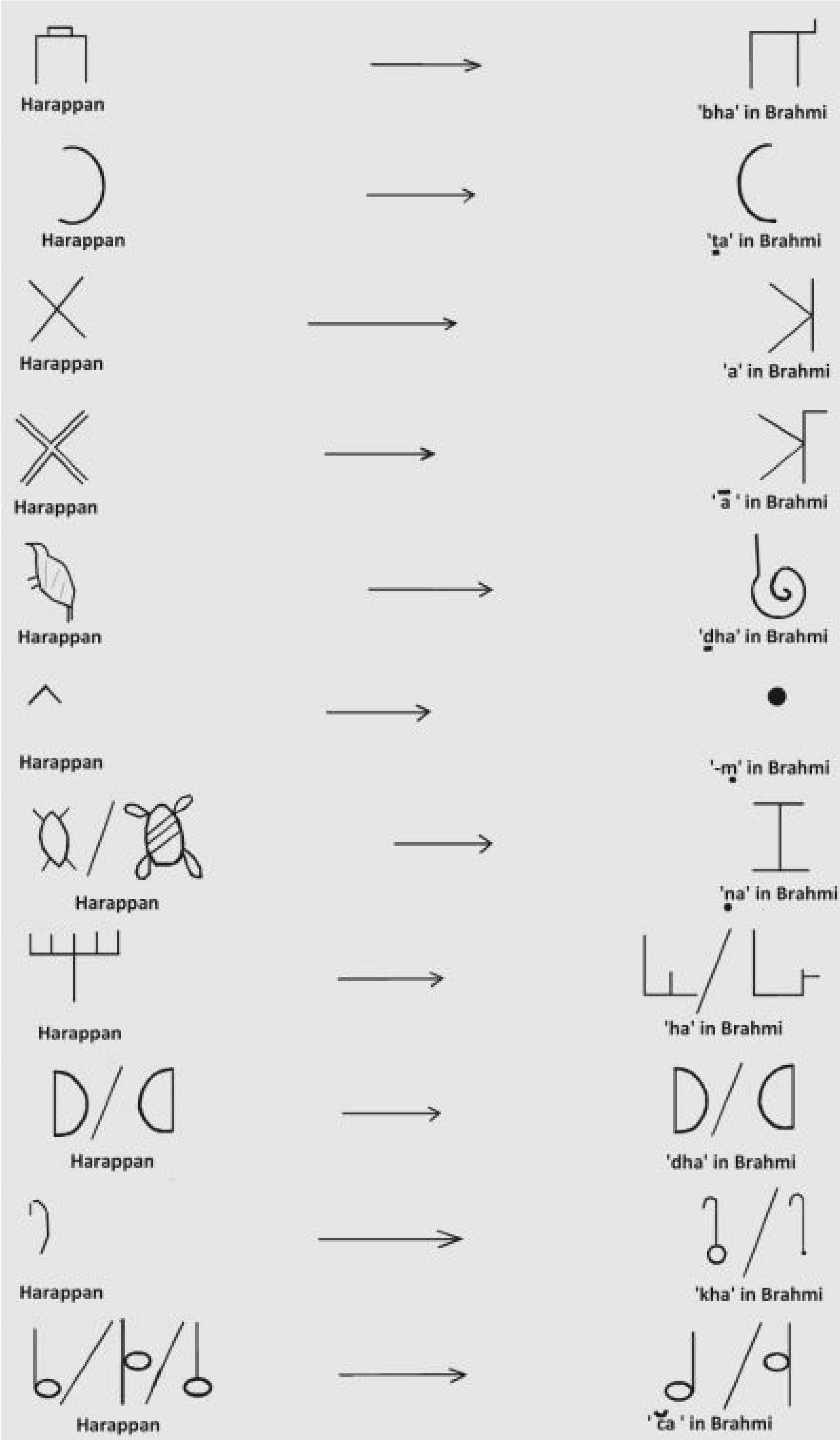




Harappan
'ma' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ai' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ai' in Brahmi
Harappan
'pha' in Brahmi
Harappan
'da' in Brahmi
Harappan
'sa' in Brahmi
Harappan
'pa' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ba' in Brahmi
Harappan
'śa' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ga' in Brahmi
Harappan
'c̆ha' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ka' in Brahmi
Harappan
'i' in Brahmi
Harappan
' ī ' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ṭha' in Brahmi



Harappan
'ra' in Brahmi
Harappan
'va' in Brahmi
Harappan
'la' in Brahmi
Harappan
'u' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ḍa' in Brahmi
Harappan
'tha' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ṣ̌a ' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ǰa ' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ǰa ' in Brahmi
Harappan
'e' in Harappan
Harappan
'na' in Brahmi
Harappan
'na' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ya' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ta' in Brahmi
Harappan
'ǰha ' in Brahmi



Primary list of signs:

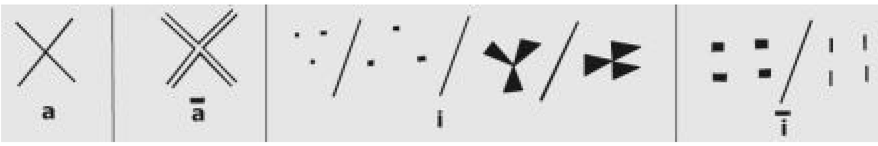
This flexible primary list of Harappan signs and their Brahmi equivalents covers almost all major symbols of both the scripts. The signs have been arranged taking into consideration their corresponding frequencies of usage, evolutionary traits and the telltale marks of evolution (as discussed before). In their proto states, a few signs in the Harappan seem to have common origins, following similar shapes. With time, however, these seem to have given rise to more signs, corresponding to separate sounds. In this way, similar-looking shapes and signs have culminated into more distinguished sound-features in the Brahmi.

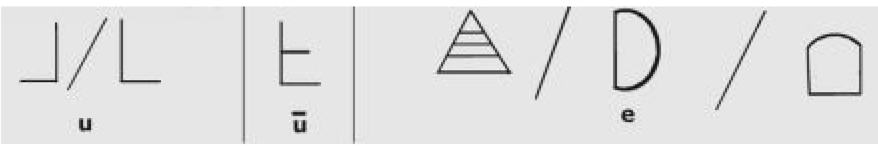
Sometimes, in the ancient writing samples found in the Indian subcontinent, we find that a mixture of Harappan and Brahmi features has been used. This definitely points towards a continuous

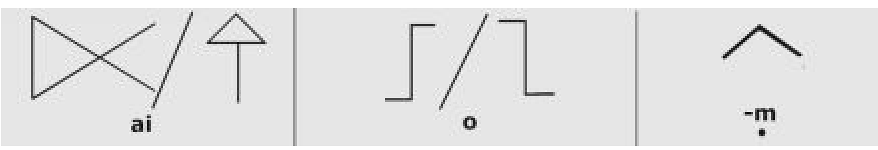
evolutionary process that transformed the Harappan script into the later day Brahmi. This also explains why many of the Harappan signs seem to have been simply carried forward (even in actual form) in the Brahmi script.

We can now form the list of signs of the Harappan, corresponding to those of the Brahmi, in alphabetical order (followed in the Brahmi script). This will mean a rearrangement of the elements of the primary list of signs. Also, it is to be noted that in these lists it is not possible to mention all allographs of the respective signs. In the following list major allographs have been used however.

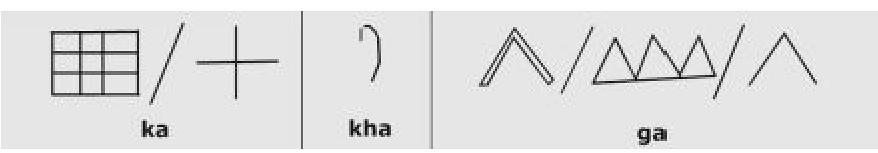
Vowels:

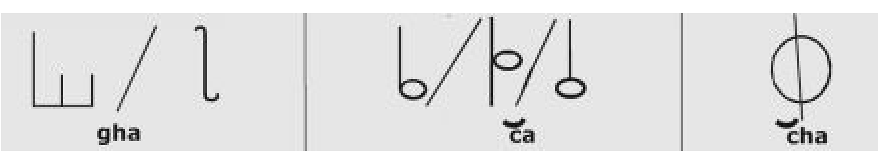


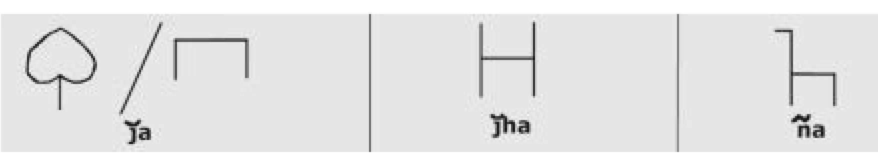




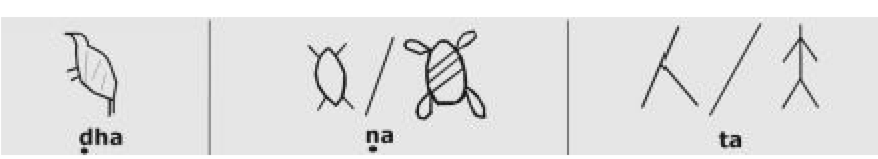
Consonants:

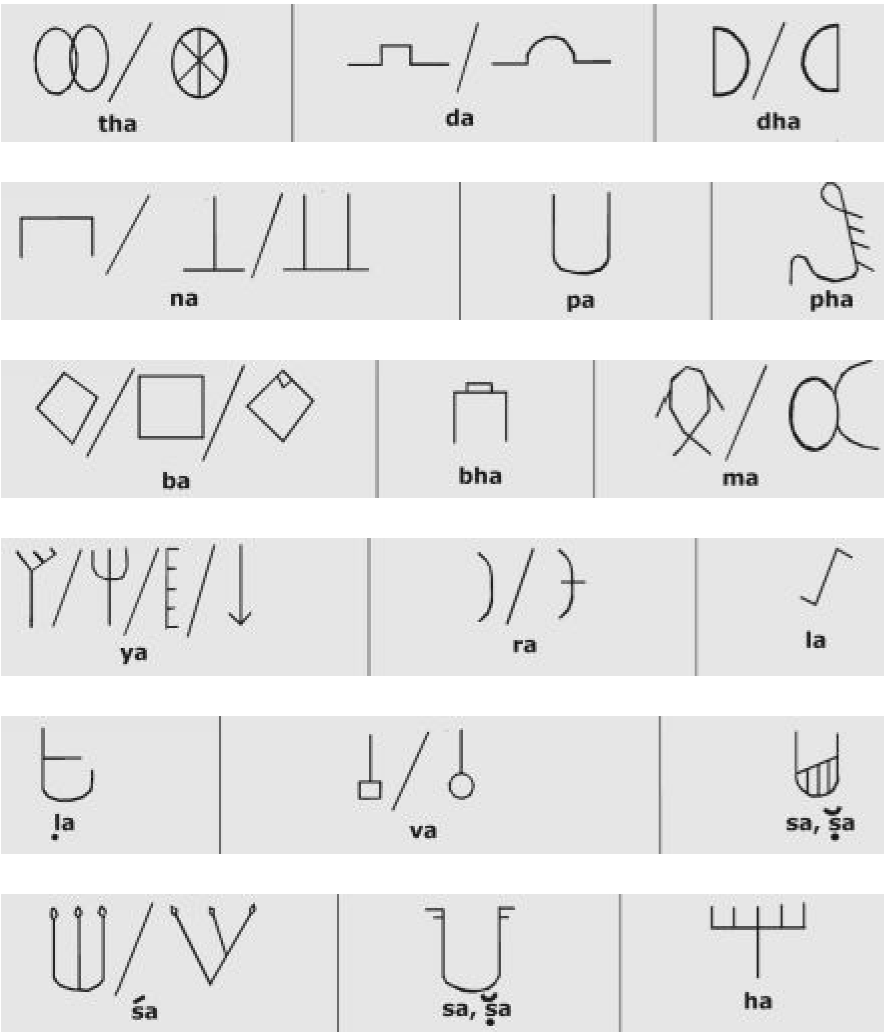












Considering the fact that the Harappan script may have been proto-Brahmi, the underlying language to be expected should be Sanskrit, or proto-Sanskrit, or derivatives of Sanskrit. Many of the rules of evolution that apply to scripts are equivalently true for languages too. Like scripts, languages too render themselves to similar evolutionary inspections, as they too carry imprints of their journey down the ages.

Conclusion:

The Sanskrit language itself has evolved and changed over time (and place). However, it is distinguishable due to the various cultural and evolutionary traits it carries. This is equally true for any language in the world. Take the example of English. It has evolved a great deal since the Middle Ages. The English of Shakespeare was in many ways different than the English we have today. Again, today's 'Queen's English' is different from the American version of the language. This does not bar us from recognizing English today as a single unique language. The various evolutionary traits that it carries in its heart render themselves to our analysis regarding the evolution itself.

Similarly, we have knowledge about the evolution of Sanskrit-family of languages since the time of the 'fall' of the Harappan civilization. We have the story of their evolution since a given point in time. There is no reason to believe that the same or similar principles of evolution did not apply before that point in time too. It is far more logical and real to think otherwise.

The most likely use of the Harappan inscriptions seems to have been for trade transactions. As such, they are supposed to carry a number of proper nouns, describing the source and ownership of the goods. Even today, tags associated with trade transactions are supposed to carry such information. Name of the company selling the goods is expected today on such tags. Discovery of various Harappan seals from as far as Mesopotamia and the Gulf endorses this view. A few exceptions to this may however be expected as objects with Harappan inscriptions on them may have been used for other purposes too.

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Subhajit Ganguly is a physicist whose areas of expertise include the Theory of Abstraction. His contribution to the theory is noteworthy, to say the least. The other areas of science that he has made notable contributions to include astronomy, mathematics and the Chaos Theory. Zero-postulation is a new concept he has introduced to the theorizing process in sciences. He is an Advisor to the Figshare Open Science Platform and is an Ambassador for the Open Knowledge Foundation.